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SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ELECTION TERM UPDATES)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EC](#)

SUBJECT: GUAYAS ELECTIONS AND BEYOND - PSC ROLLS ON

REF: A) GUAYAQUIL 1120 B) QUITO 2771

1. Summary: As expected, the Social Christian Party (PSC) dominated election results in its heartland of Guayas province and the city of Guayaquil. Jaime Nebot easily won reelection as mayor of Guayaquil and the incumbent PSC prefect, Nicolas Lapentti, turned back his challenger and won a fourth term as prefect. Jimmy Jairala, the Ecuadorian Roldosista Party (PRE) candidate for mayor of Guayaquil, did better than expected; Citizens Force candidate Humberto Mata did worse. The PSC made gains elsewhere on the coast, mainly at the PRE's expense. To no surprise, President Gutierrez' Patriotic Society Party (PSP) candidates lost badly. End Summary.

Prefect Race

2. The official vote count is still underway but it is clear that Nicolas Lapentti was reelected as prefect for his fourth term with approximately 40.2% of the votes. Lapentti's closest rival, Humberto Mata from Citizens Force, won 20.5% of the vote. Mata received fewer votes than he had in the 2000 sectional elections, when he claimed electoral fraud. Gloria Gallardo (PRIAN), was the only woman running for prefect of Guayas, and placed third with 16.8% of the votes. PRE candidate Adolfo Bucaram, brother of disgraced former president Abdala Bucaram, received just 10% of the vote. Renan Borbua, PSP prefect candidate and cousin of President Gutierrez, received 5.2%.

Mayor of Guayaquil Race

3. In Guayaquil, Jaime Nebot (PSC) was reelected for a second term as mayor, defeating Jimmy Jairala (PRE) by less than had been expected. Some polls had suggested Nebot winning by a three to one margin, but the vote count to date indicates Jairala received about 29.6% of votes to Nebot's 56.7%. Jairala's relatively strong showing may have been due in part to his popularity as a journalist and television personality. Fernando Barreno of the PRIAN was third with 8.2%. Felipe Mantilla, PSP candidate and former Governor of Guayas, received only 1.7%. In total, the PSC won 16 out of 28 mayoral races in Guayas, all of them with more than 35% of the vote. The PRIAN and PRE won 4 mayoral contests each, the Popular Democracy Party (DP) won one, one was suspended and alliances won the final two races.

PSC Gains Elsewhere in Coastal Region

4. The PSC also gained in several other provinces within the Guayaquil Consular district. The PSC consolidated its power in the provinces of Manabi and Zamora Chinchipe while winning the mayoral races in the important cities of Babahoyo and Quevedo (in Los Rios province); San Cristobal and Isabela (Galapagos); and in Azogues (Caar). The PRE won the prefect and mayor races in Loja but suffered a bruising defeat at the hands of the PSC in the race for mayor of Machala (El Oro province) and in the race for prefect of Manabi, both once considered PRE strongholds. The Democratic Left (ID) won the prefect and mayoral races in Azuay. The alliance candidate for the PSP and DP won the Galapagos prefect race and the Santa Cruz mayoral race.

Disturbances Marr Voting Day

5. Press reported and police confirmed disturbances in five municipalities of Guayas on election day. In El Empalme, disturbances caused the temporary suspension of voting. In Duran, unidentified political party members tried to burn a school down where elections had taken place as a form of protest. From that municipality, various PRE members drove to the Electoral Tribunal of Guayas (TEG) to report fraud against their candidate. In Isidro Ayora, PRIAN members also took semi-burned electoral ballots to Electoral Tribunal of Guayas (TEG) to report fraud. Press also reported confrontations between the police and PRIAN members there. In Samborondon, the president of a voting center was reportedly shot as the voting center was closing down. Finally, the elections were suspended and will be re-run in the municipality of Simon Bolivar due to violence

over possible electoral fraud.

Comment

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ELECTION TERMS UPDATED)

16. Despite these isolated disturbances, which affected only a minor part of the electorate in Guayas, the elections elsewhere were generally peaceful and ran smoothly in most voting centers. Guayaquil Consulate officials visited 30 voting centers as OEA observers in Guayaquil and encountered no irregularities or violence.

17. The PSC consolidated and boosted its dominance in Guayas province and made some inroads elsewhere in the coastal region of Ecuador, at the cost of the PRE. While some fault the PSC aging leadership or the PSC's overemphasis on public works rather than social welfare, many "costenos" clearly retain faith in the party and are attracted to decisive leadership of party strongman Leon Febres-Cordero and the can-do attitude of local leaders Nebot and Lapentti. Meanwhile, the PRE has slowly been losing ground in the absence of Abdala Bucaram and the glaring contrast between the results of PSC versus PSC rule. While the fate of President Gutierrez' PSP is still unclear at the national level, it clearly enjoys little support in this part of Ecuador.

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